UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL
CRC/C/15/Add.5
18 February 1993

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Third session

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding observations of the Committee on
the Rights of the Child: Egypt

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Egypt (CRC/C/3/Add.6) at its 66th to 68th meetings (CRC/C/SR.66 to SR.68), held on 25 and 26 January 1993, and adopted* the following concluding observations:

A. Introduction

2. The Committee notes with satisfaction the timely submission of the initial report of Egypt, which was one of the first States to become party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also compliments the State party on its timely report, which followed the Committee's guidelines. In addition to giving the relevant laws and regulations, the report contains information on actual practices and factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention.

3. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the additional information provided by the high-level delegation which endeavoured to answer all questions from the Committee in an open way, admitting the existence of problems.

---

*/ At the 73rd meeting, held on 28 January 1993.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee takes note of efforts made by the Government of Egypt to secure implementation of the Convention's provisions throughout the country. The Committee welcomes the establishment, in January 1989, of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. It regards as important features the formulation of a general policy and strategy for the development of Egyptian childhood and the inclusion of the childhood and motherhood components in the five-year State plan 1992/93-1997/98. The Committee also notes with satisfaction the activities of the Supreme Constitutional Court in so far as the implementation of the Convention is concerned. Furthermore, the Committee notes the intention of the National Council to systematize the collection of statistical and other data as a basis for further efforts in the implementation of the Convention. Indications about research into problems relating to children in especially difficult circumstances are also welcomed. Taken together, these notable developments indicate that the Government of Egypt takes very seriously its obligations under the Convention and is moving toward establishing a firm legal basis for the realization of the rights contained therein.

C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention

5. The Committee notes that structural adjustment policies have created difficulties in the full application of the rights guaranteed by the Convention and have had a specific impact on the situation of children, in particular children in low-income categories and in rural areas. The Committee, however, takes this opportunity to recall that, under article 4 of the Convention, States parties are called upon to implement the Convention to the maximum extent of their available resources.

D. Principal subjects of concern

6. The Committee notes that, although Egyptian laws and regulations guarantee equality between the sexes, there is in reality still a pattern of disparity between boys and girls, in particular as far as access to education is concerned.

7. Of special concern to the Committee has also been the situation of children in rural areas and of disabled children. In regard to the latter, the Committee expresses concern over the very low number of disabled children who are enrolled in schools, which might reflect an insufficient sensitiveness of the society to the specific needs and situation of those children.

8. The Committee is concerned about the situation of children in conflict with the law and, in particular, of children serving custodial sentences in social care institutions. Concern is expressed, in general, as to the compatibility with articles 37 and 40 of the Convention of the juvenile justice institutions and the administration of justice system in so far as it relates to juvenile justice.

9. Specific concern is also expressed regarding the very large number of children between 6 and 14 years of age who are enrolled in the labour force and therefore lack, wholly or partly, the possibility to go to school.

Although children may to a certain extent contribute to seasonal activities, care should always be taken that primary education is available to them and that they are not working in hazardous conditions.

10. The quality of education in schools also gives cause for concern and may be an explanation for high drop-out rates; the problem relates to pedagogical methods, curricula and the lack of adequate educational material.

11. The Committee expresses its concern as to the need for measures to improve the health of children, in particular those in the school-age group.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

12. The Committee emphasizes that the principle of non-discrimination, as provided for under article 2 of the Convention, must be vigorously applied. A more active approach should be taken to eliminating discrimination against certain groups of children, in particular girl children and children in rural areas. With regard to the gap in literacy and school enrolment mentioned in the report, obstacles facing girls should be adequately addressed so that they can enjoy their right to go to school; further measures might be taken to increase the awareness of parents in this regard.

13. Steps should be undertaken to afford adequate protection to disabled children, including the possibility, in particular through education, to integrate them into society and to raise the awareness of their families about their specific needs. Efforts for the early detection of the incidence of handicap are important.

14. Adequate protection should also be afforded to children in conflict with the law. The Committee recommends that the appropriate amendments be made to the Juveniles Act No. 31 of 1974 to adequately reflect the provisions of the Convention as well as other international standards in this field, such as the "Beijing Rules", the "Riyhad Guidelines" and the Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty. In that regard it is suggested that general principles underlying the Convention such as consideration of the best interest and dignity of the child and its role into society, be taken into account. Deprivation of liberty should always be envisaged as the very last resort, and particular attention should be paid to rehabilitation measures, psychological recovery and social reintegration. Furthermore, deprivation of liberty in social care institutions should be regularly monitored by a judge or an independent body.

15. The recommendations of the studies on child labour undertaken with the assistance of the International Labour Organisation on the problem of child employment should be implemented and Egyptian legislation on minimum age should be revised. In that regard, consideration should be given to the possibility of acceding to ILO Convention No. 138 and other conventions on minimum age of employment relating to the protection of children and young persons at work.

16. The text of the Convention should be disseminated as widely as possible among the public at large and, in particular, among judges, teachers and members of other professions working with children. Furthermore, specific training courses should be organized for law enforcement personnel and the personnel in correctional facilities as well as for those working with families with psychological problems.

17. Statistical information and other indicators necessary for evaluating progress achieved in the implementation of the Convention should be included in the second periodic report of the State party.